



Testimony Before Michigan House Health Policy Committee on House Bill 4712
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Thank you and good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today about House Bill 4712.

Currently, under Michigan's Public Health Code, after 21 days or ten treatments, physical therapists (PTs) are limited to treating patients only with a prescription, **defined as a written or electronic order**, from an allopathic physician, osteopathic physician, podiatrist, or dentist. Despite the fact that chiropractic physicians are one of the five provider groups defined as diagnosing physicians under Michigan law, the physical therapy scope of practice does not allow PTs to accept a prescription for PT services from a chiropractic physician.

House Bill 4712 would change this antiquated provision in the physical therapy scope by allowing PTs to accept a prescription for PT services from a chiropractic physician. This would result in *all* diagnosing physician groups being able to write an order for patients to see the provider best suited to provide care.

The current prohibition creates a barrier to care, as a chiropractic physician wishing to send a patient for physical therapy must instead send the patient to an MD, DO, podiatrist, or dentist to get a prescription for PT services. This creates unnecessary costs for the insurer and the patient due to an additional office visit and resulting delays in care.

This barrier also prevents adequate communication between the health care providers that are actually treating the patient. Currently, the PT is responsible to communicate with the MD, DO, podiatrist, or dentist who sent them the patient (the prescribing physician). This bill would allow the communication to be between the PT and chiropractic physician.

While Michigan law allows chiropractic physicians to perform many of the same services as physical therapists, some chiropractic physicians choose not to invest in the equipment, staff, etc., necessary to provide this care. In these cases, seeing a PT may be the best treatment option for the patient. Also, it may be the desire of the patient to treat with a PT.

We must emphasize that HB 4712 will not increase the scope of practice for chiropractic physicians by providing prescriptive authority. Chiropractic physicians can currently write prescriptions for many services and products, such as MRIs, orthotics, massage, etc. It is only pharmaceutical prescriptions that we cannot, and do not, want to write. It is due to restrictions

in the PT scope that result in them not being able to accept an order from a chiropractic physician.

We will try to anticipate and answer some of the questions you may have about HB 4712, but before we do so, just a quick note on cost. Opponents of this measure will have you believe that this reform will serve to increase healthcare costs for businesses. This couldn't be further from the truth for multiple reasons.

First, given the necessity under current law for a patient to return to one of the other four physicians to obtain a prescription for physical therapy that the physical therapist can actually accept, allowing the direct referral from a chiropractic physician to a PT will eliminate a minimum of one office visit. This saves everyone time and money.

Furthermore, and more at a macro-level, both chiropractic care and physical therapy, are conservative care. Both are very low cost and low risk. If patients that need physical therapy do not receive this treatment, the patient may end up facing much higher cost procedures that could have been avoided.

Now – some questions we believe you may have:

Can't chiropractic physicians already send patients to physical therapists under the "delegation authority" in the Michigan Public Health Code?

The delegation clause in the Michigan Public Health Code does not override any direct prohibition in a licensed profession's scope of practice. Therefore, a physical therapist would still be unable to accept a prescription for PT services from a chiropractic physician.

Will the Affordable Care Act (aka "Obamacare" or "ACA") allow physical therapists to accept a prescription from a chiropractic physician?

No. The Affordable Care Act is silent on the issue, as it is the responsibility of each state to regulate scope of practice issues.

What additional costs will result to the health care system from this change?

This proposal will save costs by eliminating the unnecessary visit to another physician to secure the prescription to a PT. Both time and money will be saved by the patient, and, most importantly, continuity of care will result in better outcomes for patients, leading to overall cost reductions in the health care system.

Should physical therapists support HB 4712?

We believe that PTs in Michigan should support this legislation and the ability to accept a prescription for PT services from another diagnosing physician group.

What do other states say on the issue?

The majority of states, including our neighbors Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana, allow for PTs to accept a patient directly from a chiropractic physician.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today about this important legislation, and we ask you to support House Bill 4712.

